

2013 Medals - Columbus

Speakers: Nannette Maciejunes, Jeffrey Tucker

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>> FEMALE SPEAKER: The National Medal for Museum and Library Services is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that are serving their communities in exceptional ways.

Columbus Museum of Art Executive Director Nannette Maciejunes and community member Jeffrey Tucker traveled to Washington from Columbus, Ohio to receive the National Medal and spoke to IMLS about how the museum impacts the community.

>> NANNETTE MACIEJUNES: Well the Columbus Museum of Art has been on a great journey. It has been an incredible ride. So we wanted to go on a journey where people wanted to spend time with us, they wanted to come and be at the art museum. In fact, one of the things we talk about a lot is when you talk about a library, you always talk about using a library. But you always talk about visiting a museum.

What would it look like to use a museum? What would that look like if it was really part of your life and it was you know, there was this sort of interactive relationship with your art museum? What would that look like?

So that is the journey we decided to go on. So one of the things we did is we embraced the idea of being about creativity because there isn't anyone - if you're really talking about everyone, talk about something everyone needs. And every one of us needs creativity in their lives.

If we're going to solve the problems of the 21st Century, we need creativity. We need people to think outside the box, think entirely new thoughts.

Art Lab is one of our new programs. So this is an immersion program where it's twelve to twenty kids from different schools. You know, they are regularly with us each week all year long. And the idea is for them to - for us to find out what interests

them related to creativity in the arts and then also how do they see the museum in a different way.

>> JEFFREY TUCKER: I didn't really know what Art Lab was but I knew my interest was not at a museum. But once we actually started doing stuff in Art Lab, I realized it was a cool program. We make videos. We traveled all around Columbus. We played with Mac Books and HD cameras, like oh my goodness it was just so cool.

Like we had a certain topic and our topic was how does something relate back to the museum? So we'll go out. We'll make a video. But it has to relate back to the museum if that makes sense.

But now it has completely broadened. Like this year we did a social Sunday for district Art Lab interns and there were so many different topics. Like there was a group that talked about how do you save puppies and there was also a group about how recycling more can help with the water and pollution.

So honestly Art Lab has truly evolved to something like what you really enjoy doing and try to make it more public and known, like media based.

I was the master disaster of technology. Seriously, do not give me a computer because I feel like I'll break it. Like, I just refused to touch it. But once I had done Art Lab, like, my mentor Kristin Lance, like she made me go touch a camera. She made me go on Mac Book. She made me do it because she said like, the only way for you to enjoy it is for you to get used to it.

So like, I was really nervous. I knew nothing. Like, but now I can't see myself living without it.

I really am going to make a statement on how I can make it as a film producer or something across media. That is my big dream. That is my big goal that I have in mind and I couldn't have done that without the museum.

>> NANNETTE MACIEJUNES: I think that Jeffrey embodies what we're trying to do because Jeffrey has discovered his creativity. He has discovered his passion for life by connecting with the Art Museum. The fact that he discovered that at the art museum, I think for me is the most validating thing about what we have done.

He found it at the museum and he'll take it out into the world from the Art Museum.

Connecting people and art is so important because I think that is at its core what art museums started out to be. You know, art museums live in this wonderful tension between - between the art and the people because art museums are any kinds of museums and libraries are about - they are the art, they are the art and people. It is the connection. It is the discoveries. It is the aha moments. It is all that you discover when you are with the object.

And one thing that makes us very unique as an art museum is that a lot of people are trying very experimental programs but to change - to be willing to experiment with the experience inside the gallery.

We have been very bold and I think that sets the Columbus Museum of Art apart. We call these interactive elements inside of our regular galleries - I mean, there are wonderful works of art surrounding you. There are, you know, Renaissance paintings, modern pictures around you on the walls, our regular gallery. And we will introduce a post it note station where we ask you a question and then you can write on a post in note and put it there and sometimes we'll - these are hugely popular. People love to have a conversation around post it - through post it notes. They will even draw arrows to the other post it notes like I totally disagree with this person and they should not say that. Or I agree or I think this or you know.

So this idea to have an interactive post it note station in an art museum gallery is very unusual. Those conversations that you have at art museums, those connections between people and then between people and then the art object and then the artist that created it. Those are the things. That for us has been the journey we've been trying to go on.